2019 SAFECOM Annual Summary

A summary of key products, activities, and major meeting outcomes from 2019, and SAFECOM's 2020 strategic priorities

April 2020

(((SAFECOM®

Contents

VISION
ASSURING A SAFER AMERICA THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

MISSION
SAFECOM, AS AN ADVISORY BODY TO DHS, IMPROVES PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OPERABILITY, INTEROPERABILITY, AND SECURITY ACROSS LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE, TRIBAL, TERRITORIAL, AND INTERNATIONAL BORDERS, AND WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, SAFECOM, administered by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA),[1] worked to enhance public safety communications capabilities and improve coordination among the community. SAFECOM supported the progress of strategic priorities through its four committees: Education and Outreach, Governance, Funding and Sustainment,[2] and Technology Policy.[3] Additionally, SAFECOM members supported a number of other initiatives through organized task forces and working groups comprised of SAFECOM members and subject matter experts (SMEs) across multiple disciplines and levels of government,

with an emphasis on revising the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum; enhancing membership; supporting Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM), Next Generation 911 (NG911), and Project 25 (P25) standards and compliance; revising the communications structure of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS); and creating an Information Sharing Framework (ISF). This document provides a summary of 2019 SAFECOM key products and activities, summaries of in-person meetings, and a planned outlook on 2020 SAFECOM strategic priorities.

Photo: SAFECOM Members, November 2019

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[1] 6 U.S. Code Section 571 (c) (2) requires CISA to administer the Department's responsibilities and authorities relating to the SAFECOM Program, excluding elements related to research, development, testing, and evaluation and standards

[2] Jointly coordinated with the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
[3] Jointly coordinated with the NCSWIC

OUR IMPACT

SAFECOM Outreach and Engagement Tracker | SAFECOM Executive Board Establishment | Ten Keys to Improving Alerts, Warnings, & Notifications | P25 ISSI and CSSI Primer | Best Practices for P25 ISSI and CSSI Implementation: Volume I | NG911 Maturity State Self-Assessment Tool | CSTF Letter of Concurrence | NIMS ICS Recommendation

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Education and Outreach Committee continued to promote SAFECOM's role and its impact on public safety communications nationwide through attendance at relevant public safety conferences and through the publication of blog posts and website updates. The Committee hosted a SAFECOM School and New Member Webinar in February 2019, as an opportunity for new members to learn more about the SAFECOM Program, membership requirements and expectations, and the importance of active participation. In addition to strategizing methods and platforms to best communicate SAFECOM's mission, goals, and priorities, the Committee took steps to better understand how it is impacting the public safety community through the implementation of the SAFECOM Outreach and Engagement Tracker. This tracker captures information on how many stakeholders SAFECOM members are interacting with and SAFECOM's function in these interactions. Since the tracker's release in July 2019, SAFECOM has reached approximately 960 stakeholders across 14 engagements. The SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum Working Group was also established in 2019 to review and update the *SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum* brochure and develop recommendations and best practices based on the core objectives in the *Continuum*.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Chief Chris Lombard/Michael Davis (November 2019)   **Vice Chair:** Michael Murphy/Sean Fensterwald (November 2019)   ✓ [Blog Posts](#)   ✓ Quarterly Newsletters   ✓ SAFECOM School and New Member Webinar   ✓ SAFECOM Outreach and Engagement Tracker   ✓ SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum Working Group Establishment

UPDATING THE *SAFECOM INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM*

Developed by SAFECOM in collaboration with CISA in 2007, the *SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum* helps communities assess their current level of interoperability through a focus on five key areas: governance, standard operating procedures, technology (voice and data), training and exercises, and usage. The *Continuum* depicts what is accomplished at each end of the spectrum under low and high degrees of leadership, planning, and resources, and aids public safety practitioners and policy makers with planning short- and long-term interoperability efforts. In 2019, SAFECOM established a joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC working group to review and update the *SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.* While acknowledging the content in the current *Continuum* remains relevant today, updates will account for new content, such as the importance of cybersecurity as a critical success element.
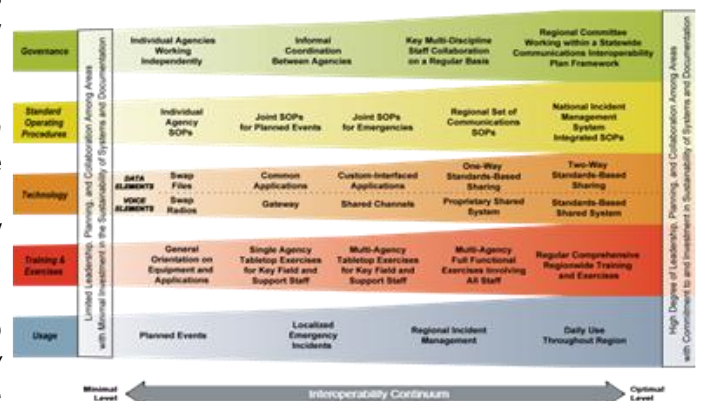

Figure 1: SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, 2007

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

In 2019, the Governance Committee engaged in many tasks to establish effective nationwide governance and networks. This included managing and providing modifications to core program documents, such as the *SAFECOM Annual Summary* and the *SAFECOM Strategic Plan.* The Governance Committee also developed the SAFECOM Work Product Approval Process to ensure all members have an opportunity to review products developed by committees. In addition, the Committee documented the SAFECOM membership process in response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit on SAFECOM membership[4] and developed the annual membership assessment process. Most notably, the Committee led major efforts to establish the SAFECOM Executive Board.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Chair: Captain George Perera
Vice Chair: Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald
- ✓ *2018 SAFECOM Annual Summary*
- ✓ *2019 SAFECOM Strategic Plan*
- ✓ SAFECOM Work Product Approval Process
- ✓ Response to Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audit and SAFECOM Membership Process
- ✓ Annual Membership Assessment Process
- ✓ SAFECOM Executive Board Establishment

SAFECOM EXECUTIVE BOARD ESTABLISHMENT

In September 2019, the Governance Committee, in conjunction with the former Executive Committee (EC), established the SAFECOM Executive Board. The new 11-member Board replaced the 32-member SAFECOM EC and consists of the SAFECOM Chair, First and Second Vice Chairs, each of the four (4) committee chairs, and four (4) additional Board Members. The Board serves as SAFECOM's leadership group and the primary resource for access to public safety stakeholders and policymakers.
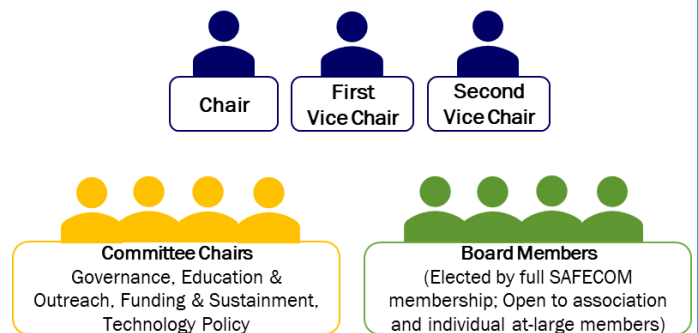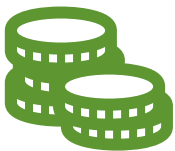

Figure 2: SAFECOM Executive Board Structure

FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE

In 2019, the Funding and Sustainment Committee published the *Emergency Communications Systems Value Analysis Guide* (Value Analysis Guide) and developed associated marketing materials. The *Value Analysis Guide* assists public safety agencies in evaluating the cost effectiveness of emergency communications systems and equipment. To aid stakeholders, the Guide compiles recommendations, best practices, and considerations for reference during annual budget planning and cost estimation. To promote the Guide, the Committee developed the *Value Analysis Guide* brochure*,* which provides a summary of key considerations for elected officials and decision-makers. Additionally, the Committee began revising the *2015 Funding Mechanisms for Public Safety Communications Guide,* which assists public safety agencies in identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for common public safety funding mechanisms.

JOINT FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SAFECOM Chair: Lloyd Mitchell
Vice Chair: Chief Bill Bamattre
- ✓ *Value Analysis Guide* Appendix
- ✓ *Value Analysis Guide* Brochure

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[4] *Emergency Communications: Overlap and Views on the Effectiveness of Organizations Promoting the Interoperability of Equipment* (GAO-18-173R). Published: Oct 30, 2017: https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-173R

TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

In 2019, the Technology Policy Committee continued to support land mobile radio (LMR) systems, promote broadband technology and deployment, and work with partners, such as the Advanced Technology Group, the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications (FPIC), the NG911 Working Group, and the ICAM Working Group to further the use and security of various technologies and frameworks within the emergency communications ecosystem (e.g., NG911, ICAM, cybersecurity). Seminal works for 2019 included the publication of two documents related to the P25 Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) and Console Subsystem Interface (CSSI): the *P25 ISSI and CSSI Primer*, which highlights some of the user-driven activities to address opportunities and challenges in deployment of ISSI and CSSI; and the *Best Practices for P25 ISSI and CSSI Implementation: Volume I*, the first of two volumes outlining best practices and lessons learned while implementing ISSI and CSSI. Additionally, the Committee published the *Ten Keys to Improving Alerts, Warnings, & Notifications* (AWN), along with a review of its companion document, *Essentials of AWNs* (publication expected early 2020).

JOINT TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Chief Gerald Reardon/Phil Mann (October 2019) **Vice Chair:** Chief Jonathan Lewin ✓ *Ten Keys to Improving AWNs* ✓ *Project 25 ISSI and CSSI Primer* ✓ *Best Practices for P25 ISSI and CSSI Implementation: Volume I* ✓ *NG911 Maturity State Self-Assessment Tool*

NG911 Working Group: The NG911 Working Group identified short- and long-term priorities to support stakeholder efforts to fund, assess readiness, and complete the transition to NG911. In 2019, the group focused on identifying and sharing best practices on management of geographic information system data, developing executive summaries of vital NG911 documents to facilitate information sharing, and developing tools to help agencies identify transition steps for NG911. Members released the *NG911 Maturity State Self-Assessment Tool*, to help public safety answering point/emergency communications center administrators and oversight personnel evaluate a system's NG911 maturity state and understand the next steps necessary to continue deployment. This easy-to-use checklist establishes a common terminology and identifies key milestones to help 911 call centers understand the multi-year NG911 implementation process. The Tool was developed with support from CISA and the National 911 Program and can be found on 911.gov. Members engaged with stakeholders at national conferences, such as the DHS CISA Cybersecurity Summit, National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Annual Conference and Expo, and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO) Annual Conference and Expo, to raise awareness about benefits of the Tool.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION TASK FORCE

SAFECOM, in coordination with NCSWIC and CISA, established the Communications Section Task Force (CSTF) to address communications and technology gaps within the NIMS ICS. In 2019, the CSTF continued to work toward developing a nationwide, federated governance model to promote and provide consistent recruitment, training, retention, and support for all-hazards incidents. The Task Force also made strides to support the development of national standards for qualification, certification, and credentialing; update training courses and curriculum; clarify existing position descriptions (Communication Unit Leader [COML], Communication Technician [COMT], Radio Operator, etc.) to include the all-hazards environment; and establish new information technology (IT) positions, including the Information Technology Service Unit Leader (ITSL) position. CISA kicked off new ITSL trainings in 2019.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION TASK FORCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Chief Chris Lombard **Vice Chair:** John Miller ✓ CSTF Letter of Concurrence ✓ NIMS ICS Recommendation

In 2019, the Incident Communications Advisory Council (ICAC) convened three times and vetted the CSTF's recommendation for a NIMS ICS refresh. The ICAC developed and shared its recommendation to unify communications and IT within NIMS ICS with the CSTF. The ICAC and the CSTF began collecting letters of concurrence in the summer of 2019 to submit to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Integration Center (NIC) as part of the NIMS ICS Recommendation package. The Task Force received 36 letters of concurrence from major public safety associations; regional interoperable communications governance bodies; state/territorial emergency management authorities; local law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services departments; as well as the FEMA Office of the

Chief Information Officer and the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Emergency Management & Disaster Response. CISA presented the NIMS ICS Recommendation to FEMA NIC in 2020.

INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK TASK FORCE

Established in April 2019 in conjunction with NCSWIC, the Information Sharing Framework Task Force (ISFTF) is comprised of IT and public safety communications interoperability subject matter experts from public safety agencies across the country. The ISFTF is developing an Information Sharing Framework (ISF) to ensure effectiveness of new products and technologies as agencies transition to mobile and fully interconnected environments. Making data interoperable and into information that can be shared is a requirement that spans beyond traditional boundaries. In addition, first responders should be able to discover, access, and consume any relevant information on a need-to-know basis, regardless of jurisdiction, affiliation, and location. The intended audience for the ISF are Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC) and other state-level communications personnel working in LMR, broadband, 911, and state public AWN systems all in alignment or directly involved in acquisition, management, and oversight of public safety emergency communications. The overarching goal of the ISF is to support transition to a common information exchange approach that a public safety community can adopt and use efficiently to make its emergency communications ecosystem interoperable.

INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK TASK FORCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Chief Jonathan Lewin ✓ Information Sharing Framework Draft (Rev 0.9)

Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force

In 2019, the Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force (P25 CAPTF) transitioned management from the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) Compliance Assessment Program to administration under the SAFECOM Program. Looking toward 2020, the Task Force will coordinate with DHS S&T on supporting ISSI/CSSI compliance and interoperability testing, developing a recommendation for a minimum set of standards for Mission Critical Push to Talk and Interworking Functions for action by the P25 Steering Committee and P25 manufacturers, and engaging with the P25 User Needs Working Group to develop interoperability and compliance testing for new user needs requirements.

2019 ELECTIONS AND ESTABLISHING THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ELECTIONS | CREATED A MORE NIMBLE AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP GROUP: SAFECOM EXECUTIVE BOARD

Beginning in September 2019, SAFECOM conducted elections to fill available committee leadership positions with the following results:

- **Education & Outreach Committee Chair:** Michael Davis (SAFECOM At-Large, Ulster County (NY) 9-1-1 Emergency Communications)
- **Education & Outreach Committee Vice Chair:** Sean Fensterwald (SAFECOM At-Large, Fairfax County (VA) Fire & Rescue)
- **Funding & Sustainment Committee Chair:** Lloyd Mitchell (Forestry Conservation Communications Association)
- **Funding & Sustainment Committee Vice Chair:** Chief Bill Bamattre (Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association)
- **Technology Policy Committee Chair *[Special Election]*:** Phil Mann (American Public Works Association)

In addition to its standard annual committee elections, SAFECOM undertook the task of establishing a SAFECOM Executive Board *[Figure 3]* to serve as SAFECOM's leadership group and the primary resource for access to public safety stakeholders and policymakers.

SAFECOM Executive Board

Chair

First Vice Chair

Second Vice Chair

Committee Chairs
Governance, Education & Outreach, Funding & Sustainment, Technology Policy

Board Members
(Elected by full SAFECOM membership; Open to association and individual at-large members)

SAFECOM Chair: Chief Gerald Reardon *SAFECOM At-Large, City of Cambridge Fire Department (MA)*
SAFECOM First Vice Chair: Chief Chris Lombard *The InterAgency Board for Emergency Preparedness & Response/SAFECOM At-Large, Seattle Fire Department (WA)*
SAFECOM Second Vice Chair: Michael Murphy *SAFECOM At-Large, Baker Police Department (LA)*

Governance Committee Chair: Captain George Perera *SAFECOM At-Large, Miami-Dade Police Department (FL)*
Education & Outreach Committee Chair: Michael Davis *SAFECOM At-Large, Ulster County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications (NY)*
Funding and Sustainment Committee Chair: Lloyd Mitchell *Forestry Conservation Communications Association*
Technology Policy Committee Chair: Phil Mann *American Public Works Association*

Board Member: Chief Douglas M. Aiken *National Public Safety Telecommunications Council*
Board Member: Anthony Catalanotto *SAFECOM At-Large, New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services*
Board Member: Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald *National Sheriffs' Association*
Board Member: Charlie Sasser *National Association of State Technology Directors*

Figure 3: SAFECOM Executive Board Membership

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

20 COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE/WORKING GROUP MEETINGS | 2 CONFERENCE-STYLE MEETINGS IN COLLABORATION WITH NCSWIC – APRIL 2019: PITTSBURGH, PA, & NOVEMBER 2019: MIAMI, FL

In-person meetings are an integral part of the SAFECOM program. CISA hosted a number of large and small in-person meetings throughout the year to promote collaboration and networking among members as well as determine solutions to some of the nation's most pressing issues on emergency communications interoperability. Below, please find select summaries for some of the group's larger in-person meetings. Full meeting summaries for these and other in-person committee meetings may be found under the *SAFECOM Meetings* section of the SAFECOM website.

22
MEETINGS HELD

5 *Working Group Meetings*
5 *Task Force Meetings*
12 *Committee Meetings*
2 *Public Safety Strategic Collaboration Meetings*

April 2019 In-Person Meetings: Pittsburgh, PA

SAFECOM and NCSWIC members met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 22-26, 2019, where they heard from the FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Program and the California SWIC on significant improvements to AWN capabilities. Members also heard from panelists on challenges related to public safety communications cybersecurity risks and mitigation strategies, after which they engaged in table discussions to begin scoping the development of guidance associated with cyber-related success indicators assigned to SAFECOM and NCSWIC in the *National Emergency Communications Plan* (NECP). A proposal briefed to members to address information sharing interoperability resulted in the establishment of the ISFTF, which addresses the need for end users to access standardized, interoperable, and consumable information at the scene of an incident.

During the SAFECOM-only meeting, members heard from a representative of the host-state, Mark Wrightstone, Pennsylvania SWIC, on its public safety communications initiatives. Members also discussed the revision of the *NECP*, received updates from DHS S&T, and updates on First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) products and services. Additionally, SAFECOM heard about California's statewide Supplemental Location Mapping and Analytics in the Cloud and NG911 capabilities, the integration of a supplemental data provider, and lessons learned from the 2018 wildfires. Experts in the field, including former SAFECOM member Chief Charles Werner (Chair, National Public Safety Council of Unmanned Aircraft Systems [UAS]; Fire Chief Emeritus, Charlottesville, Virginia, Fire Department), discussed how UAS, or drones, continue to transform how public safety tackles emergency communications, current and future UAS capabilities, and efforts to address evolving challenges related to the technology, such as building capability awareness among the public safety and decision-maker communities and breaking down agency silos to establish more functional and standardized rules, regulations, and requirements. Members discussed challenges related to increasing interconnectivity of urban technologies, as demonstrated through Smart Cities, and how data interoperability and management pose unique challenges and opportunities to SAFECOM.

November 2019 In-Person Meetings: Miami, FL

Photo: Matthew Travis, CISA Deputy Director

SAFECOM and NCSWIC members convened in Miami, Florida, November 4-7, 2019, where CISA's Deputy Director, Matthew Travis, served as keynote speaker. Members also heard presentations on the CSTF and ICAC's efforts to update the NIMS ICS; the FirstNet Authority and AT&T's current and future products and services; and ongoing efforts by CISA and the National Governors Association (NGA) to improve cybersecurity governance and resources available to the public safety community to address organizational cyber risks. Members also discussed how advances in broadband capabilities for public safety have led to integration challenges with statewide networks, and the benefits and challenges of 5G for public safety mission critical systems. Members learned about recent CISA and Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) technical demonstrations designed to align public safety communities around common ICAM practices that enable cost-effective, and secure information-sharing in an operational environment. Members also learned about the value of preparing Emergency Management Assistance Compact Mission Readiness Package models prior to major events, such as hurricanes. Additionally, members discussed NECP implementation planning; participated in a working session to develop revisions to the *SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum* to account for the evolution of data and voice communications; learned about CISA's current performance management projects; and a progress update from the ISFTF on establishing a framework.

During the SAFECOM-only meeting, Sheriff Paul H. Fitzgerald, National Sheriffs' Association, highlighted the International Criminal Police Organization ([INTERPOL](link)) and the use of federation—an indispensable tool for law enforcement that provides the ability to query two databases, simultaneously. Members also received updates from each of the committees and task forces as well as an overview of the revitalized DHS S&T organizational structure, including updates to the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility. Members discussed the need to support T-Band through support of passage [H.R. 451](link): "Don't Break Up the T-Band Act of 2019." The November meeting also hosted the inaugural SAFECOM Executive Board meeting.

SAFECOM'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONWIDE GUIDANCE

NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Fiscal Year 2019 SAFECOM GUIDANCE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GRANTS

SAFECOM members provided significant input into the 2019 NECP. Endorsed by SAFECOM, CISA released the *2019 NECP* on September 25, 2019. The updated plan addresses current gaps within emergency communications, reflects new and emerging technological advancements, and provides guidance to drive the Nation towards a common end-state of emergency communications. SAFECOM will incorporate the plan's Success Indicators and implementation activities into its 2020 strategic planning and product development.

SAFECOM members also consulted CISA on the development of the *Fiscal Year 2019 SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants*. Updated annually, this guidance provides current information on emergency communications policies, eligible costs, best practices, and technical standards for state, local, tribal, and territorial grant recipients investing federal funds in emergency communications projects.

2019 NEW MEMBERSHIP

NEW ASSOCIATION AND AT-LARGE MEMBERSHIP

Anton Damm | Forestry Conservation Communications Association (FCCA) [Alternate]
John Holiday | National Governors Association (NGA)
Tom Ling | SAFECOM At-Large, Kalispel Tribal Public Safety Department
John Miller | National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
Harriet Rennie-Brown | National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA) [Alternate]
Chief Greg Rubin | International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
Theron Rutyna | National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) [Alternate]
Brad Stoddard | NCSWIC [Alternate]
Danae Wilson | NCAI

2020 SAFECOM PRIORITIES

FUNDING | TECHNOLOGY | LMR/LTE INTEGRATION | EDUCATION AND OUTREACH | GOVERNANCE | SUCCESSION PLANNING | TRAINING | COMMUNICATIONS SECTION OF THE NIMS ICS | INFORMATION INTEROPERABILITY | CYBERSECURITY

Looking ahead to 2020, SAFECOM developed strategic priorities and a 2020 work plan in close alignment with the *2019 NECP*. Major priorities include:

♦ Create an effective digital media strategy

♦ Build adaptive strategies for updating governance models

♦ Strengthen the cybersecurity posture of the emergency communications ecosystem

♦ Identify innovative methods to fund and sustain emergency communications systems and activities

♦ Support adoption of new technologies and interoperability solutions

♦ Facilitate the transition to NG911

♦ Support the deployment of ICAM policies

♦ Compile P25 user needs recommendations

♦ Support implementation of information communications technology within NIMS ICS

♦ Assess P25 standards compliance of communications equipment

♦ Develop an Information Sharing Framework

MANY SAFECOM COMMITTEE PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SAFECOM WEBSITE.

FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SAFECOM PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT SAFECOMGovernance@hq.dhs.gov.